

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 16-25 are in the case. No claim amendments are presented.

Claims 16-18, 20, 24 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,868,779 to Ruiz. Claims 19 and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Ruiz in view of U.S. Patent 4,706,670 to Andersen et al. Those rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present application is based on PCT International Application PCT/IB97/00956 filed on August 1, 1997. That application in turn claims benefit of the filing date of August 2, 1996 of British priority patent Application No. 9616267.2.

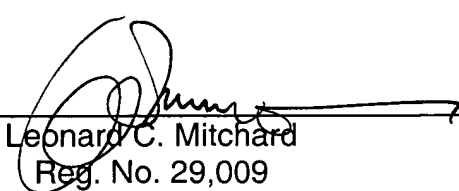
The Ruiz patent has a filing date of August 15, 1997. Since the August 15, 1997 filing date of Ruiz is subsequent to the August 1, 1997 filing date of the underlying '956 PCT International application of the present case, it is clear that Ruiz is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Withdrawal of the outstanding anticipation and obviousness rejections is accordingly respectfully requested.

Allowance of the application is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

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